[French Protestant Church, London.]

A

# JUSTIFICATION

OF THE

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

FRENCH-CHURCH

IN

# LONDON,

About the ſuſpenſion of

Mr. ELIJAH DELMEY.

Printed by R. DANIEL, 1656.

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A

# JUSTIFICATION

## Of the proceedings of the French-Church in London, about the suspension of Mr *Elijah Delmey*.

THE French Church in London having bin troubled almost two years by Mr *Delmey*, who hath renewed & fomented that unhappy division wherewith the Church had been vexed these many years; the Consistory, after they had very often represented to him his failings, and conjured him in the name of God to mend himself; seeing that instead of mending he rejected all admonitions, and hardened himself more and more in his sin; after they had too long suffered under his disorders, have in the end been necessitated to suspend him from the exercise of his Ministery, untill he do acknowledge his faults and return to his dutie.

This action which hath been approved by all persons that were not prepossest, and hath satisfied many that were

offended at our indulgence, hath on the other ſide diſpleaſed the kindred of Mr. *Delmey* and ſome other factious perſons, who have by all manner of wayes publiſhed their reſentment and diſpleaſure at it. To that end not content to have preſented to his *Highneſs* the Lord Protector, petitions full of impudent lies & baſe calumnies againſt the Conſiſtory, they have beſides ſpred libells and ſcandalous papers among the Engliſh Miniſters, endeavouring to make us odious unto thoſe, that govern the Church and the State. Wee on the contrary reſting upon the juſtice of our cauſe did not ſtirre but were quiet, hoping that God would maintain our innocency, confound falſhood, make the truth appear, and fruſtrate the fraudulent practiſes of thoſe, that have declared themſelves our adverſaries and enemies.

But finding that the little care, we took to juſtifie our ſelves, hath made many to believe us guilty of thoſe things wherewith we were charged, after we had with Chriſtian moderation & patience ſtayed longer then in prudence we were obliged, we have thought it unfit any longer to abandon our cauſe by a pernicious diſſimulation and ſhamefull ſilence: So we reſolved to publiſh the cauſes which have moved yea obliged us to this ſuſpenſion of Mr. *Delmey*, that every one may judge on the one ſide of the irregularity of his proceedings and the injuſtice of thoſe that ſide with him and ſlander us: and on the other, acknowledge the juſtice of our actions. To which purpoſe we will repreſent in few words the ſubjects we have of complaint againſt him and the faults of which we accuſe him.

1. Firſt, that both in his ordinary diſcourſes and in his Sermons he hath reviled and ſlandered the whole Conſiſtory, his colleagues, and many of the Elders in particular, yea having ſet forth horrible and falſe accuſations of which he hath been ſhamefully convinced.

2. That

2 That having publiſht all that which paſt in the Conſiſtory upon the ſubject of our differences, he hath kindled and entertained an unhappy diviſion in the Church.

3. That holding private Aſſemblies with ſome members of the Church, he hath made uſe of them to oppoſe the government of the Conſiſtory, and by that means hath further fomented the diſcords and quarrels.

4. That he went from houſe to houſe ſowing lies and calumnies againſt the Conſiſtory.

5. That he hath many times in his Sermons inveighed againſt the doctrine of his Colleagues, & never would confer with them privately to deſire them to clear their mind about thoſe things which he found amiſs, nor make any application to the Conſiſtory to complain, according to the Order ſet down about that.

6. That in his Sermons he hath often inveighed againſt the reunion of the Church of Canterbury made in the laſt Colloquie, and renewed the old quarrels, as alſo by the Letter which he had written for that Church in the name of our Conſiſtory full of heavy reproches, and by that means hath declared himſelf an enemy to our Churches, as it was reſolved in that very Colloquie.

7. In that he hath raiſed an unhappy quarrell between Mr. *Ciſner*, and Mr. *Iurion* and Mr. *Defervacques* And that in ſtead of labouring to appeaſe it, as he was intreated, he hath kindled and venomed it, joining with theſe two laſt in a foul accuſation which they have ſet forth againſt Mr. *Ciſner*, & upholding the quarrell with them to the very laſt, although the Conſiſtory had declared it to be falſe and ill grounded.

8. That contrary to the Order of the Conſiſtory he hath of his own head ſent & recommended Mr. *Kerhuell* to the Church of *Santof* where a Schiſme was formed upon that occaſion.

9. That

9. That he hath very often lied in our Consistory, for which he hath been rebuked and convicted.

Of all these charges against Mr. *Delmey* we have convincing proofs, some of which we will here produce, keeping other proofs in reserve, if he have the confidence to deny any thing that we charge him with.

Although all these offences and many more justly deserved a great satisfaction, yet we have alwayes bin disposed to forgive him all that was past, upon condition that he should return to his duty for the time to come.

Wherefore contenting our selves to tell him of his faults with all mildness we had a singular care to make orders to hinder the continuation of his disorders. All the Acts we have done about that may be referred to these three.

1. *That the Pastours should promise to keep the affairs of the Consistory secret.*

2. *That the Pastours should not preach one against the other, but if any found fault with the Sermon of his Colleague he should ask him satisfaction in private, or address himself to the Consistory, not undertaking of himself to confute the doctrine, which he should not find agreeing to his sense.*

The third Act was done upon occasion of a difference between Mr. *Cisner* and Mr. *Delmey*, who complaining one of another, the Consistory gave order, for that reconciliation, that *the Ministers should mutually ask and give pardon for all offenses.*

Though these Acts were very mild and favourable to Mr. Delmey, as any man may see, and besides most just and necessary, yet he never would submit himself to any of them, calling them unjust, tyrannicall and deviliſh,

As for the first concerning the secrets of the Consistory, he answereth that he would keep secret that which must be

kept

kept ſecret, as he had alwaies done, or that he would keep ſecret that which he would judge to require ſecrecy. And that if we made a conſpiracy againſt the State he ſhould be obliged to declare it. Finally that he would keep the ſecrets of the Conſiſtory according to the word of God and our Diſcipline. To which we anſwered him that he muſt not entertain ſuch an ill opinion of us, as to think us capable to conſpire againſt the State; & ſince the things which he had divulged had cauſed diviſion in the Church, one ought not to referre himſelf to his judgement about things to be ſpoken or concealed, but to that of the Conſiſtory; ſeeing that neither the word of God nor our Diſcipline gives us any expreſſe or particular rule upon that ſubject. But he would adde nothing to his promiſes.

As for the ſecond Act forbidding Miniſters to preach one againſt another, he ſaid that they would thereby inſnare him to keep him from announcing all the counſell of God, and diſcharging all the functions of his calling, which enjoyned him not only to preach againſt vices, but alſo to confute hereſies; And that if his Colleagues preached any falſe doctrine he was obliged publickly to confute them, leaſt it ſhould infect the flock. To which it was often anſwered that, if the tenets which had bin preacht contrary to his, were of an indifferent nature, he ought not to take upon him directly and preſently to impugne them, but that upon occaſions the Conſiſtory ſhould not diſlike that he ſhould expreſs his ſenſe; But if they were dangerous things then he ought to complain to the Conſiſtory, and if the doctrine were judged falſe and pernicious, not only he ſhould be allowed to confute it in his Sermons, but the man that held it forth ſhould be enjoyned publickly to retract it. To this he anſwered that in Divinity nothing was indifferent, and that he was ſure that his opinions were the pure truth of God, and the contrary opinions falſe and dangerous.

For

For the third Act which concerned his reconciliation with Mr. *Ciſner*, he anſwered, that he had not offended him, but that he had been offended by him; and therefore could not ask him pardon. And as for the offences of Mr. *Ciſner* againſt him he pardoned them, becauſe ſpeaking againſt him was ſpitting againſt heaven: But thoſe which concerned his father, the honour of God being intereſſed in them he could not pardon them, and therefore could not be reconciled with him. And though Mr. *Ciſner* accepting the Act, craved pardon of him for all pretended offences, according to the order of the Conſiſtory, yet he perſiſted in that pertinacy to refuſe all reconciliation with him; in the mean while preaching and adminiſtring the Sacraments for many months, inſiſting much in his Sermons upon the reaſons which ought to hinder us from reconciliation or pardoning of offences. In the end being aſhamed of the continuall reproaches made to him upon that ſubject, he ſaid that he pardoned him; but with ſo much faintneſs and conſtraint that one might plainly ſee the rancour of his heart, which he hath ſince openly ſhewed by his actions, and by the publick profeſſion which he made once before all the congregation, that he could not account him but as his enemy, ſince he accounted him as the enemy of our Churches. And he could never be brought to give any ſatisfaction to Mr. *Ciſner* for the great offences he had done him.

After this we have from time to time and very often exhorted him to ſubmit himſelf to our Actes, but he alwayes refuſed it. Yea he never gave over publiſhing all that was done in our Aſſemblies and confuting (to his power) out of the pulpit the doctrine of his Coleagues, daily multiplying his reproaches and outrages againſt the Conſiſtory.

This

This obliged us to ſuſpend him from the charge of Moderator, judging it unreaſonable that he ſhould be Preſident of a company whoſe orders he did pertinaciouſly reject. So ſeeing that we could not prevaile with his ſpirit, neither by that chaſtiſement nor by all our intreaties, we ſummoned him to appear before the *cætus*, that is, the Aſſembly of the ſtranger Churches gathered at *London*. That company ſince the eſtabliſhment of our Churches in this town hath been alwayes eſteemed the true, natural & competent judge of all the particular Churches which compound it, according to the authority given to that Aſſembly by the patent of *Edward* the VI. As by a great number of examples of perſons that have appealed from the Conſiſtory to the *Cætus*, we may prove, that this Aſſembly hath ever ſince enjoyed that right.

Mr. *Delmey* not being able to denie or decline the judgement of ſuch a lawfull Aſſembly promiſt us at the firſt to ſubmit himſelf unto it. But he refuſed it ſince, eſpecially when it was queſtion to preſent himſelf before that Aſſembly, juſtly fearing the ſentence of condemnation which ſuch wiſe and underſtanding men were like to pronounce againſt him. Yet although he would not accept them for his Iudges, he accepted them for his Mediatours. Being brought before the *Cætus* they preſt him to ſubmit himſelf to our Acts. And that they might be ſo clear and intelligible that he could not cavil at them, the two firſt were ſet down in theſe words

I.

*The Miniſters ſhall promiſe to keep the buſineſſes of the Conſiſtory ſecret, ſuch as the Conſiſtory will order to be kept ſo, and the divulgation whereof might cauſe diſorder among the members of the Church.*

II.

*Miniſters ſhall not preach the one againſt the other, ſo that*

*it be evident that they contradict and confute each other. Which yet muſt not hinder them from preaching freely their ſenſe in indifferent matters, not repugnant to the fundamental points of Religion, and containing nothing contrary to the confeſſion of our Churches and to the holy Scripture. Of this the Conſiſtory ſhall be judge.*

Inſtead of the the third Article which regarded the reconciliation of Miniſters, becauſe the other Miniſters had given ſatisfaction, the following Act was framed to oblige Mr. *Delmey* to give us ſatisfaction for the offenſes by him offered unto us, and for the diſorder which he had brought into our Church.

III.

*Whereas many injuries and offences have been done by* Mr Delmey *to the Conſiſtory, both in his private diſcourſes and in his Sermons, and that he hath cauſed much trouble in the Church by divulging the ſecrets of the Conſiſtory, and by his preaching: The Conſiſtory requireth that he acknowledge his fault and ask forgiveneſſe for it.*

Theſe Acts having no more pleaſed him then other Acts before, and he having rejected them, the *Cœtus* framed the three following and preſented them to us.

## The Acts of the Cœtus.

I.

*The Paſtours ſhall keep thoſe buſineſſes of the Conſiſtory ſecret which the ſaid Conſiſtory ſhall ordain to be kept ſecret, according to the Word of God and the Diſcipline.*

II.

*The Miniſters ſhall abſtain from preaching the one againſt another, and giving juſt occaſion of perſonal offence to any in their Sermons, yet reſerving to every one the liberty of preaching his ſenſe about indifferent things, ſuch as are thoſe that are*

not

*not repugnant to the holy Scripture or to the Confeſsion of our Churches: Of which the Conſiſtory ſhall be judge, yet without any prejudice againſt appealing to the Colloquie.*

III. *The Miniſters ſhall forgive one another ſuch offenſes as through humane frailty they may have given the one to the other in this controverſie, And Mr. Delmey ſhall promiſe, hereafter to ſubmit himſelf to the Acts of the Conſiſtory, as ſorry to have heretofore given occaſion to the contrary.*

Although we found not that theſe Acts allowed us that juſt ſatisfaction which we might expect from Mr. *Delmey* for the offenſes we had received and were ſorry that our other Paſtours were involved on the third act of Mr. *Delmey* in the ſame acknowledgement of offenſes, he having no juſt reaſon to complain of them; Yet to ſhew our zeal towards peace, we thought it expedient to yeeld ſomething of our right, and accept theſe Acts without any alteration. Whereas Mr. *Delmey* having taken ſome daies to conſider whether he ought to ſubmit to thoſe Acts, in the end denied to do it. And although ſome daies after the Moderatour of that Aſſembly had repreſented to him in grave and preſſing terms what horrible crime he incurred by tearing the Church in pieces and what agonie he might expect in his death-bed for cauſing and entertaining that unhappy breach; repreſenting to him the juſtice and neceſſity of the things required of him, and reproching him with his ſhamefull ignorance unworthy of a Miniſter of the Goſpel to maintain that there was nothing indifferent in Divinity, yet he perſiſted in his deniall and contumacy. The Cœtus ſeeing that they advanced nothing by their mediation and intreaties, declared that they left Mr. *Delmey* to the judgement of our Conſiſtory, and to the exerciſe of our own Diſcipline.

After this Mr. *Delmey* continuing ſtill his ſeditious Sermons, making aſſemblies of his own to oppoſe our govern-

ment, and increasing his outrages against the Consistory, we offered him many times reconciliation and peace, so that he would accept of our Articles or those of the *Cœtus*. But having again refused both, after we had in vain tried all gentle waies, we assembled with the Deacons and suspended him from the exercise of his charge till he had acknowledged his faults and returned to his duty, not knowing how to bring otherwise a remedy to our disorders then by that necessary severity.

Certainly if all our proceedings and Mr. *Delmey*'s great faults be seriously considered, there is great reason to wonder how we could bear with him so long, and used no sooner the just and necessary remedy to our disorders, to prevent the further effects of those evils in the Church, which may in some part be imputed to our indulgence.

Can any say that we have used precipitation in condemning a person whose disorderly courses we have so long tolerated, even eighteen months; to whom we have represented his faults and his duty, and to whom we have alwaies offered peace and reconciliation, so that he would submit himself to order for the time to come? Can any one say that it was out of hatred or animosity or resenting of injuries that we have thus proceeded against him; we that have bin ready all, and those chiefly of our number to whom he had offered the greatest outrages, to forgive him all, yea without any satisfaction, if he would but promise to submit himself to the Consistory?

If after all this we be asked what sufficient ground we have to suspend him seeing that he is neither an heretick nor an ill liver. Truly we have not grounded our sentence against him upon any such thing. We do not accuse him of drunkenness, fornication, adultery, or theft, but of rebellion against Ecclesiasticall order, and bold impugning of the

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ſenſe and practiſe of Reformed Churches. A vice ſo great that our Diſcipline hath judged it no leſſe grievous and dangerous then the other above named. For our ſaid Diſcipline puts them all in one and the ſame Article, and pronounceth equally of all that they muſt not be tolerated in a Miniſter. In effect who ſees not that rebellion againſt Eccleſiaſticall order is a great ſin, ſince it openly overthroweth all order and government in the Church, aboliſhing all authority of the Conſiſtory, aud taking from the ſame all power of exerciſing any Eccleſiaſticall cenſure againſt any whoſoever. If a Miniſter will not ſubject himſelf to the Order of the Church, how can he exhort others to ſubject themſelves to it, or cenſure them for declining that ſubjection? Now it is ſo evident that Mr. *Delmey* is guilty of that crime, that no man that will caſt an impartial eye upon theſe proceedings can deny it. Is it not rebellion to Eccleſiaſtical order to decline all ſubjection to the Conſiſtory, to reject all his Acts and all his Admonitions, and to have raiſed and fomented a party in the Church to oppoſe the juſt and lawfull government of thoſe whom God hath appointed rulers in the ſame? If then it be certain that Mr. *Delmey* hath done all theſe things who can doubt but that he is truly a rebell? And if he be ſuch, how could we (after we have borne with him ſo long) bear with him alwayes, without a manifeſt breach of our diſcipline, which injoyns us the contrary, and bringing our Church, through our indulgence, to utter ruine? If any Miniſter was guilty of ſome of thoſe other faults mentioned in the ſame Article, fornication, adultery, drunkenneſs and ſtealing, no doubt but every one would approve with all his heart that he ſhould be ſuſpended from the exerciſe of his charge. Why then ſhould any find fault with our ſuſpending of Mr. *Delmey* as guilty of a crime as bad as any of the reſt.

If a Miniſter were not onely guilty of ſome of the forenamed vices, but would maintain them and perſevere in them, is more worthy of ſuſpenſion, then another that would acknowledge his ſinne, and crave pardon for it, promiſing to amend, ought not Mr. *Delmey* by the ſame reaſon deſerve more juſtly to be ſuſpended, not onely for being a rebell ſo long, but more for declaring and maintaining his rebellion, through his refuſing to ſubmit unto the Acts of our Conſiſtory, both to thoſe that were propounded to him hitherto and thoſe that ſhould be hereafter.

Perhaps it will be objected, but why will ye call him rebell for not ſubmitting to wicked, unjuſt, tyrannicall and devilliſh Acts, contrary to his honour and conſcience and the glory of God? A reaſon which Mr. *Delmey* hath often alleadged to us, to juſtifie that he could not with any juſtice ſubmit to our Acts, ſaying beſides that it was better to obey God then men. Truly if our Acts were ſuch as he calls them, he might with good reaſon refuſe to ſubmit unto them, for in ſuch a caſe rebellion ſhould be commendable and obedience guilty. We deſire then that it be examined whether they be ſuch, and whether they deſerve to be ſo qualified.

As for the firſt Article forbidding the Miniſters to divulge the things which the Conſiſtory hath enjoined to be kept ſecret, what juſt exception can he find againſt it? If that promiſe be exacted of the Elders publickly in the Church when they are admitted into their Office, why ſhould not the like obligation ly upon the Miniſters? To what end ſhould ſome keep theſe things ſecret which are done in the Conſiſtory, if others had the liberty to pnbliſh them? Wherefore in all well ordered Conſiſtories this order is carefully kept to forbid the Miniſters as well as the Elders to reveal that which is done in the Conſiſtory, and which is judged by that Aſſem-

ſembly to be inconvenient to publiſh. An order ſo carefully obſerved in our Church by all the Paſtours that never any before did contradict it. So if Mr. *Delmey* tell us that his conſcience will not give him leave to make that promiſe, ſure his conſcience is otherwiſe made then that of other Miniſters ſince he makes ſcruple of that which all other Miniſters approve.

It will be ſaid alſo that he promiſt to keep ſecret all that which muſt be kept ſecret. Yea, but is it not plain that by ſpeaking thus he promi'ſt nothing in effect, ſince after he had divulged all, as he hath done often, he might pay us with that excuſe, that the things which he revealed ought not to have been kept ſecret, and that he did not judge them to be of that nature? But the clauſe added to that Article, *to keep thoſe things ſecret, the divulgation whereof might cauſe a diviſion in the Church*, is that chiefly which barred all evaſions from making that promiſe. For as he knowes in his conſcience that it was by the divulging of the buſineſſes of our Conſiſtory that he hath cauſed and maintained a diviſion in our Church he would be ſure not to promiſe a thing which he had not done before and was reſolved never to do.

Thus being once cenſured in the Conſiſtory for a ſeditious Sermon, he was not contented to reveal the cenſure pronounced againſt him, and by him rejected, but he went preſently to complain to his his kindred and friends, two of which gave high words to Mr. *Ciſner* about it upon the Exchange, whence ſprung a curſed quarrel which could not yet be appeaſed. Thus alſo he hath enflamed all his abettours telling them that which was done among us, ſetting them on and ſending them from time to time to come with expoſtulations and to give ill words to the Conſiſtory. How could we ſuffer any longer a perſon that never would

make

make such a necessary promise for the good and quiet of our Church? Moreover, was it not a shamefull thing that all things handled in our Assemblies should be known of every one, and that the least and the simplest of the Church should bear themselves as judges of our resolutions, and censure them? Was it not also a great disorder that all things examined & debated in the Consistory should again be debated & examined privately by a factious congregation which Mr. *Delmey* had framed in the Church to oppose our Government? So before we could form any conclusion in the Consistory we were to expect the resolution of that clandestine congregation that Mr. *Delmey* might consent to ours, as himself hath declared to us; For many times in the Consistory when his advice was asked upon some resolution, he told us that *he must consult with his friends before wise, grave, and religious men*, for so he calleth them whom he hath drawn to his side. Certainly he must be blind that seeth not that such a man was openly refractory to all order, and that we could keep him no longer but we must make our selves guilty of all the miseries and inconveniences which follow rebellion.

As for the second Act which forbids the Ministers to preach the one against the other, is not such an order absolutely necessary for the edification of the Church? We pretended not thereby to oblige thr Min isters to be of the same tenet and preach all the same opinion in all things. We would but keep Mr. *Delmey* from continuing to confute directly and openly all the opinions of his Colleagues contrary to his; having added to that effect an expres clause that this Article did not take from Ministers the liberty of preaching their sense, though contrary to the sense of his Colleagues, so it be but in things indifferent which oppose not the ground of Faith. Can any thing be imagined more ridiculous then his Answer to that, That there is nothing indifferent in Divinity?

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For example he believeth that the opinion of the morality of the Sabbath concerning a seventh day to be kept holy, & the divine institution of Sunday, and to believe it unlawfull to preach on Holy dayes commonly called, are so many Articles of faith, & they that receive them not as such sinne against the foundation. But was it not a great injustice for him to pretend that he may freely confute the opinion of his Colleagues and not allow them the like liberty? Is not that challenging a power over the faith of his brethren, a thing so expressely forbidden us both by Scripture and our Discipline, commanding that the Ministers of the same Church be equall and that not any one pretend superiority over his fellowes? What Minister is able to live peaceably with such a man, who makes all his private opinions to pass for so many Articles of Faith and condemns all the opinions of his Colleagues and of almost all the Doctors of the Reformed Churches which are contrary to his, as so many heresies? Finally can we suffer any longer a Minister professing openly and publiquely that he will confute all opinions not agreeing to his, & declaring that he would never alter that manner of preaching? What edification can the poor people receive, hearing allwayes a Pastour opposing the doctrine of his Colleagues, and since God hath set us as leaders of the Church, could we suffer any longer such a way of preaching which tends manifestly to the ruine and scandal of the infirme?

As for the third Act both ours and that of the *Cœtus* they contain the satisfaction demanded of M^r *Delmey*, for the outrages and reproaches wherewith he hath charged either the whole Consistory or all his Colleagues, for the troubles which himself hath brought into the Church, and for not submitting himself to our Acts, or not making that promise of submission which was required of him.

But as he never would give any ſatisfaction for the time paſt, ſo he never would make any promiſe for the time to come. Wherefore (will they ſay) will ye oblige him to give you any ſatisfaction ſeeing that he hath offended no body? This reaſon he hath often alleadged unto us whereby he doth evidently ſhew his pride and preſumption which makes him think himſelf impeccable, and never to confeſs that he hath done amiſſe. Can it be ſaid that he hath not offended the Conſiſtory, having loaden with injuries and outrages both the Conſiſtory and his Colleagues? Was it not offending the Conſiſtory to ſay that the motion made by that Company to reſtore the Sermons upon dayes commonly called Holy, was fooliſh, impertinent, unjuſt and devilliſh, and to have compared us to the *Gaderens*, comparing himſelf to Ieſus Chriſt; ſaying that we would drive him away as the *Gadarens* expelled Chriſt for their ſwines ſake. Did he not offend us when he called us ſo often ſuperſtitious idolaters and men without conſcience; and when he ſaid that the Acts made againſt him were unjuſt, barbarous, inhumane and deviliſh; and that we perſecuted him becauſe he preach't the power of godlineſs? And did he not offend us all when he called us all Atheiſts, and applied unto us many markes of Atheiſme? Did he not offend us when he cauſed a Petition to be preſented to his *Highneſs* whereby he accuſeth us to have perſecuted him for preaching againſt Holy dayes, taught the doctrine of repentance, and confuted Atheiſticall and dangerous opinions? Did he not offend his Colleagues, calling aloud one of them a blaſphemer, in the Church, upon a Communion-day; and an heretique, accuſing him of treaſon and comparing him to *Iudas*, ſaying to him, *What thou doeſt, do quickly*? Hath he not offended his other Colleague alſo, calling him fool & unregenerate, accuſing him of ſacriledge, and with him

two Miniſters and Profeſſours of Divinity of *Geneva*. Yet after he hath vomited upon us, and many others, ſuch great and almoſt numberleſſe injuries, after he hath laid ſo many falſe accuſations againſt us, without any ground, of which he hath bin to his great ſhame convicted, reading himſelf his own condemnation, he continueth ſtill to ſay that he hath offended no body, and he would chuſe rather to die then to acknowledge that he hath committed any fault. Thus being once intreated and conjured to ſigne ſome Acts as his Colleagues had done, he refuſed it obſtinately, with no other reaſon of his deniall but this, that if he did it he ſhould acknowledge that he had done amiſs, and that he would die rather then to make ſuch a confeſſion. It is true that one day after that we had repreſented unto him all his faults, he ſhewing himſelf moved with our admonitions did a great force to himſelf to make this confeſſion to us.

*I am a man, I may have done amiſſe, but I believe it not. I find my ſelf guilty of nothing yet I am not thereby juſtified.*

*He is a man*, Doubtleſſe he believed before that he was ſomething above a man, and likely he muſt by ſome naturall infirmity have bin warned and convinced of his humanity. *He may have done amiſſe but he believes it not.* What a preſumption is it for him to believe that he hath not done amiſſe, having charged the whole Conſiſtory and his Colleagues with ſo many injuries and outrages? Hath he not done amiſſe when he grounded upon his pretended ſufferings and perſecutions the hope of his preſent felicity and of his eternall ſalvation, ſaying if you expell me out of the Church it will be a cauſe not only of my temporall, but alſo of mine eternall happineſſe? *He is guilty of nothing*; but he muſt needs have a ſeared conſcience, if it do not make him feel great remorſes for ſo many ſins which he hath committed. Is he guilty of nothing having ſo grievouſly offen-

ded the whole Consistory, torn the Church, calumniated all the Protestant Churches, and told us so often foul lies? Is such a man to be suffered with that vain presumption of infallibility in his doctrine and manners? It is without doubt a devilish principle to be sure never to acknowledge any fault, for as sinning is humane, persevering in sin is devilish. We desire him to acknowledge that he hath done amisse by declining his submission to our Acts. He refuseth to acknowledge so much. Certainly since his disobedience to our Orders is the cause of all our dissensions, ought he not to acknowledge that he is sorry to have bin the cause of such a great evil?

And as for the promise that we required of him that he would submit to the Acts which we should make hereafter, doth not his declining of it overthrow all order and government? Is not any man that is a member of a society obliged to submit to the resolutions of the same, and if he denies so much, doth he not deserve to be expelled out of it?

How can a Minister of the Church exhort any of the Congregation to submit unto the orders of the Consistory, if himself do not submit to them? Or how can he make censures and admonitions in the name of the Consistory, if himself doth obstinately reject them?

If the three Acts which we have lately examined are not unjust, tyrannicall, devilish, barbarous, cruell or inhumane (as he calls them) but rather most just and necessary for the good and peace of the Church, Who sees not that M *Delmey* is evidently guilty of rebellion for refusing to submit unto them?

Besides is it not rebellion in him to have erected a company of refractory men to oppose the lawfull government of those whom God hath established to be leaders in his Church, and to make himself the head of the rebels? He was

not

not contented to have by his pernicious example set on many to reject the orders of the Consistory, himself in our presence hath often pleaded their cause and sided with them against us.

But he deserved very justly to be suspended as the onely authour of our divisions, who hath raised them not onely by divulging the affairs of our Assembly (as we said before) but also by his seditious Sermons, and by his factious dealing. As for his Sermons he hath many times exhorted the men of his party to have no communion with the others: One time especially he told them that they must put on a firm, unchangeable and unremoveable resolution not to return unto them. Also he hath many times to his power confuted the reasons alleadged by his Colleagues to exhort the people to live in union and concord, and to pardon offenses mutually.

To shew by what Spirit he is led, once upon a Communion-day when one of our Ministers had exhorted the people to peace & charity, alleadging, as motives, the spirituall communion, that is betwixt us as children of the same Father, members of the same body, animated by the same Spirit, washt in the same blood, partakers of the same graces and called to the hope of the same glory; He for his part expreſt a great dislike of that exhortation, and censured it in the Consistory. And to back his censure he alleadged that among those he spake to, there was both good and bad, and that they must not keep communion together, according to the prediction, *that there should be perpetual enmity between the seed of the woman and that of the Serpent.* Is not this a strange man that will have a Pastour so to preach to his hearers. Among you there be some that are Gods children, some that are the Devils, some good ome bad, some believers some unbelievers, some elect

ſome reprobate. As for you that are believers, elect, and children of God take heed of having any union with the unbelievers, reprobate and children of the Devil. In ſuch a way he hath often adreſt his ſpeech to ſome perſons whom he calls Saints, and Gods children, exhorting them not to agree with the others, whom he calls wicked and reprobate. But if he know ſuch abominable perſons in our Church, why doth he not name them to us, that wee may endeavour to bring them back to repentance; or, if they be hardned in their ſins, that we may cut them off as rotten members? No doubt but he ſhould have done ſo, and not openly exhorted ſome of the Church to keep aſunder from others, upon that ſuppoſition, that ſome are good and elect, and the others wicked and reprobate. So he calls them that are not of his opinion and whom he could not draw to his faction. Which made him tell us once, That if we preacht upon holy dayes, we ſhould ſcare all the good men out of the Church. His abettours following his example, as they call themſelves Saints, ſo they hold themſelves the onely men that truly deſerve that name, deſpiſing and rejecting others as wicked, and one of them did not ſtick to call us all reprobate.

After this, in an Aſſembly which we gathered of the heads of families to inform them of the ſubject of our differences, he openly ſet on our people to diviſion and rebellion againſt the Conſiſtory, which he loadeth with outragious words, yea did his worſt to ſtirre the people to a tumult, to which he had diſpoſed many by ſecret Aſſemblies which he had held the day before. If he hath been ſo bold as to incite the people publiquely to diſcord in his Sermons, Iudge ye what he may have done in his Conventicles, where he meets often with thoſe of his party.

Have we not then ſufficient reaſon to ſuſpend a perſon whoſe

whoſe maximes and pernicious practiſes overthrow all order and government and have wrought ſuch a ſad diviſion among us? If in the Liturgy of the holy Communion thoſe perſons are excommunicated that make Sects by themſelves to break the unity of the Church, Have we not much more cauſe to ſuſpend from the exerciſe of his charge, a Miniſter who by his faction hath broken the peace and union of our Church;

Of one wrong we were moſt ſenſible, that even before we had interdicted him the exerciſe of his Miniſtery, he had cauſed a petition full of falſe and impudent accuſations to be preſented to his Highneſs. Of which theſe are the very words.

## To his Highneſs the Lord PROTECTOR of the Common-wealth of England Scotland and Ireland.

*The humble petition of divers fathers of families of the French-Church in London, in the behalf of themſelves and many other members.*

SHeweth that the Conſiſtory of that Church, againſt the mutuall agreement of themſelves and the reſt of the French-Churches in *England*, have introduced the obſervation of holy daies, and tyrannically ſuſpended M^r. *Delmey* one of their Miniſters from part of his office, for preaching againſt holy daies and Atheiſticall and dan-

dangerous opinions, and for teaching the doctrine of repentance and other orthodox truths endeavouring to eject him out of his Cure &c.

We are accused to have introduced the observation of Holy daies, because not long since we thought it convenient to preach upon those daies for the just reasons which we shall represent.

Mr. *Delmey* had bin suspended from his charge of Moderatour because we thought it not just that he should sit President of a company whose orders he did wholly reject and despise. And that reason was alledged when that Act was made. He on the contrary imputes to us that we have suspended him for preaching against holy daies and against atheisticall and dangerous opinions, and for teaching the doctrine of repentance and other orthodox verities.

What? Are he and his abettours so destitute of shame as to give such false reasons of his suspension? Do they not accuse us as abominable persons and Libertines, when they say that we have suspended him for preaching repentance? Do they not accuse us to be Atheists and Hereticks, when they say that we have condemned him for teaching orthodox doctrines and confuting atheisticall and dangerous opinions? But as they made use of these calumnies to make us odious to them that govern the State, we know also that they have disseminated them to make us odious among the English Ministers. Seeing then that notwithstanding that lenity and charity which we have used towards him, having with so much patience born with his unrulinesse a very long time, he shewed so much hatred and animosity against us going about to ruine and undoe us if it had bin in his power, could we with any justice suffer such a man any longer amongst us?

But they object that we could not suspend Mr. *Delmey* since

ſince he had appealed from our Acts to the Colloquie, and that we had accepted of his Appeal. It is very true that he appealed the laſt year unto the Colloquie. But a Colloquie having bin called ſince, which yet could not be held, may we not ſay that his Appeal is now void? But ſuppoſe it to be ſtill in force. What? In the uncertainty that we were in to have a Colloquie perhaps in many years, as it is ordinary in this countrey by reaſon of the poverty and ſmall number of our Churches, muſt we in that intervall have given Mr. *Delmey* leave to do what he would as he pretended and to ruine the Church by his ſcandalous Sermons and his factious practiſes? Had we not bin much to blame, if we had not done our endeavour to hinder the continuation of theſe diſorders, which threatned our Church of a totall diſſipation?

Theſe are the cauſes that obliged us to ſuſpend Mr. *Delmey* from the exerciſe of his Miniſtery. And they are ſo juſt & neceſſary, that we doubt not but that all perſons not prepoſſeſt with paſſion will wholly approve them. Whence it is made evident how falſe is that which he and his followers impute unto us, & publiſh every where, that we have ſuſpended him becauſe he hath oppoſed himſelf to the eſtabliſhing of holy daies, which we are accuſed to have brought in. To confute that calumny we will repreſent ſomewhat at large both our ſenſe, and what we have done upon that ſubject.

In England they uſed heretofore to keep ſome daies holy, and among others thoſe of Chriſts nativity, New-years day, Eaſter, Pentecoſt, and the daies that follow them; upon which there was preaching, and afterwards by an ill cuſtome almoſt every one upon thoſe daies was licentious and gave himſelf to games and ſports. They that undertook the reformation of Church and State having aboliſht that ſcrupulous and ſuperſtitious obſervation of holy daies, many Miniſters did not think it fit to preach upon thoſe daies, hoping that by that means they would be no more conſidered

then other common daies. But it is happened through the inclination that men have to retain that which contributes to their content and delight, that although many had removed the exerciſes of piety, they could not remove the ordinary licentiouſneſſe from that time, nay rather, whereas before time the people ſpent part of thoſe daies in devotion and another part in ſports, now after the removing of the exerciſes of piety the moſt part ſpends them wholly in licentiouſneſſe; So that which was good was taken away, and the moſt part of the evil is left. Doubtleſſe our Churches, after the example of the Dutch-Churches ought to retain their ancient cuſtomes according to the priviledges which they have to exerciſe their own Diſcipline. Yet one of the Miniſters of our Church, of his own private motion, without any Commiſſion from our Conſiſtory, did propound to the Colloquie of our Churches in the year 1644. that holy daies ſhould be aboliſht, thereby meaning that the exerciſes of piety ſhould be left off which were uſed to be done in thoſe daies. And as he had much power in that Colloquie and with thoſe that compounded them, which at the moſt were the Deputies of two or three Churches, being beſides a man of authority, he had no great difficulty to obtain what he asked. All the other Churches and ours eſpecially was very ill ſatisfied with that reſolution: and Mr. *Delmey* Miniſter of Canterbury was ſo ill ſatisfied, that he ſhewed much reſentment about it. Since that time the Church of London in the laſt Colloquie held in the year 1654 moved a queſtion whether by that Act of the precedent Colloquie it was intended to brand with ſuperſtition and idolatry the Reformed Churches which uſe Sermons upon thoſe daies. Which being reſolved in the negative, We ſeeing our people to give over working upon thoſe daies as the other people of the land, ſeeing alſo that moſt part of the people wiſht for Sermons, thought fit of late to ſatisfie that juſt and religious de-

desire. That is the ground of Mr. *Delmey*'s lowd accusing of us that we have brought in the observation of holy dayes, and traducing us as idolaters and superstitious men. But we will say the true differences that we have with him, and so let every man see the injustice of his calumnies.

Our chief question is not whether it be lawfull upon Easter and Whitsunday, to speak of the resurrection of Iesus Christ on the one, and of the sending of the Holy Ghost on the other, according to the practise and custome of all the Reformed Churches. We will but observe that Mr. *Delmey* for fear of being superstitious shewes evidently that he is so in that point, because he would think that he should have committed a great sinne; if upon those two dayes he had spoken a word in his Sermons of either of these mysteries of our Religion. For the day of Christs Nativity if it fall upon a Sermon-day he believeth that one must not at all preach upon that day; We on the contrary believe that one may very well preach upon that day, and mention also the Nativity of our Lord Iesus.

Of New yeares day he hath the same opinion, as of that of Christs Nativity, and will not have any Sermon upon it because it was dedicated to the memory of his circumcision. We on the contrary letting the matter of the Circumcision alone, say that not onely it is a harmeless but a most convenient custome to assemble ourselves upon that day, to thank the Lord for the protection which he hath extended upon us both the year before and all the years of our life, and to crave his blessing both for that which we begin, and for all the years that we are to live, or to ask of God the pardon of our sinnes, and the assistance of his Spirit for the whole conduct of our life. Likewise for the dayes which follow Easter and Pentecost, Mr. *Delmey* believeth that it is not lawfull then to preach, whereas we believe that we may very well do it.

But that things which we believe not, may not be imputed unto us, this is our opinion upon that matter. We believe that Ieſus Chriſt by his death hath taken away all that obligation inherent either to places or times, and that diſtinction of dayes which was in force under the old Teſtament. We believe that all dayes are equall and that it is a weakneſs in faith to make more of one day then another. We believe that it is not in the power of any Church or any other Aſſembly to impoſe the obſervation of a Holy day to the Chriſtian people, and that it is a ſuperſtition to keep a day Holy out of devotion to the day, for any holines or honour attributed unto it, as though it repreſented ſome myſterious thing.

Theſe things we grant very willingly, and that is enough to clear us from the imputation of idolatrie and ſuperſtition which is layd upon us. But this is the queſtion between us. Whether we be guilty of ſuperſtition and idolatrie for preaching upon Chriſtmas-day, New years day, and the dayes which follow Eaſter day and Whitſunday. Mr. *Delmey* maintained that by ſo doing we are ſuperſtitious and commit a great ſinne. We believe neither. We acknowledge that we ſhould be guilty if we preacht upon theſe dayes out of ſome opinion of their merit and holineſs above other dayes. But we are ſo farre from that thought, that many among us do not ſo much as know the names of thoſe true or pretended Saints, to whoſe memory ſome of theſe dayes have been dedicated. We thought it expedient to preach upon thoſe dayes onely to keep our people employed about devotion, and to take them off from the ill examples of licentiouſneſs in the Nation where they live. We acknowlege that if the people among which we live, or our people, were accuſtomed to follow their labour and the exerciſes of their calling upon thoſe dayes, it would be a vain affectation to take them off from their labour.

bour precisely at that time to put them upon exercises of piety. But since every one is used to forbear working upon those dayes or to employ them in sports, can any take exceptions at our meeting in our Temple to employ the people of our Congregation about devotion and the service of God, and to take them off from idleness and deboish? Whether is better to pass ones time in a Tavern or in a Church? in drinking or praying? In playing or hearing the word of God and singing his praises? If (as we hope that Mr. *Delmey* will confess) it is not ill done to pray, to read, and meditate Gods word in private, we can hardly comprehend why it will not be lawfull for us to do in publique with onr brethren, in the Temple, that which we may do in private in our houses? If these exercises of piety are good things in themselves we believe not that our union in the ordinary place of our meeting make them evil and unpleasing to God. And if those dayes be not polluted, as certainly they are not, but altogether like unto other dayes; we may doubtless, imploy them alike as others to the glory of God. But as we leave Mr. *Delmey* in his own liberty and opinion, not obliging him either to preach or meet with our Assembly in such times, it is certainly a great tyranny and injustice for him to go about to take from us that comfort & joy which we enjoy when we see all us together imployed in the exercises of piety and Gods service.

So much is enough to shew how farre our opinion and practise is distant from our adversaries of the *Romish* Communion. For they observe those dayes out of their devotion to that holiness which they attribute unto them. They are farre from esteeming the dayes equall, They hold some more holy and more excellent then others, & believe that to keep them holy is a religious Act, and a point of Gods service: Whereas we account all daies to be alike and keep none as holy, and if we preach upon any, it is for our mutual edification and instruction.

Although we have repreſented this our ſenſe many times to Mr. *Delmey*, yet we could never obtain from him that he would have ſo much charity as to leave accuſing and crying us down as ſuperſtitious and idolaters. Many times alſo we have deſired him to tell us his reaſons why he would judge us guilty of theſe errours. One of our Paſtours hath often offered to conferre with him either in publick or private upon that queſtion.

But whether he miſtruſt the juſtice of his cauſe, or the ſtrength of his parts, he would never come to that triall. He had promiſt to give us his reaſons in writing to prove his tenet and confute ours, But he hath, belike, found his own reaſons ſo weak that he choſe rather to go from his word then let us ſee them. In ſtead of which he hath made us whole Sermons, uſing the ſame arguments againſt us as we uſe againſt the *Romiſh* Church, and charging the Reformed Churches with the ſame idolatry and ſuperſtition in that point: Whereby we found our ſelves obliged to give way that one of our Paſtours ſhould likewiſe confute him out of the pulpit, to juſtifie both us and all the Proteſtants from the blame laid upon us by him. He ſeeing himſelf convinced and not knowing what to reply, out of revenge and animoſity againſt him that had put him to *non plus*, applyed unto him and to the whole Conſiſtory many marks of atheiſme in a ſermon which he preacht ſoon after.

But this is very ſtrange, that after he had alledged his reaſons to us he told us often in private and in his Sermons alſo, how that opinion of his againſt the exerciſes of piety upon thoſe daies was a truth which God had revealed unto him &an extraordinary light which he had. Ought he not thenbe aſhamed to utter the viſions of his brains unto us as revelations of the Spirit of God. Or doth he think that we will admit that principle of private revelations contrary to the divine, to authorize the enthuſiaſms of fanaticall men and aboliſh the authority of Gods word? In conſcience can any blame us

for

for not embracing an opinion for which no reaſon can be given, but only an imaginary revelation; Or can any find fault with us becauſe we chuſe rather to follow the opinion of well nigh all our Doctours and the practiſe of ſo many Reformed Churches then the revelations or dreams of an enthuſiaſt? Himſelf, if he had any modeſty, would not undertake to condemn ſo ſeverely the ſenſe of all our Reformers and almoſt all their followers and to blame the cuſtome of all Proteſtant Churches, but ſome in Great *Britain*.

But we may be asked why we will not conform rather to the practiſe of *Engliſh* Churches then to that of ſtrangers? We anſwer, that ſince the firſt eſtabliſhment of our Church we had alwaies that priviledge to have our particular government, and would never conform our ſelves to that of the *Engliſh*. As our Diſcipline is in effect that of the Churches of *France*, & hath almoſt no conformity to any of the Churches of this countrey, it is much more convenient for us ro follow the practiſe of the firſt, then that of others. Beſides in this great variety of Diſcipline and form of government, to whom will they have us to conform our ſelves? Some preach upon thoſe daies, upon other grounds; we declare that it is not to follow their opinion that we do the like. Of thoſe with whom we do not agree in matter of government, we think not our ſelves obliged to borrow a pattern for the government of our Church; for thoſe whom we think to be erroneous both in doctrine and diſcipline, their authority is of little credit with us. And as for thoſe with whom we agree both in doctrine and Diſcipline, if they all agreed in the ſame practiſe; we confeſſe that their example might have more force to perſwade us to follow it. But ſince they are ſo different in their way about that point, ſome ſaying that it is well, ſome that it is ill done, to preach upon thoſe daies; who ſhall decide the buſineſs to teach us what example we muſt follow? And if many among them, yea of the moſt able and moſt famous, preach upon thoſe daies, why ſhould we be denied the like liberty?

We

We have insisted upon the declaration of our sense and justification of our conduct upon that point, because it is the chief ground of Mr. *Delmey's* accusations, for which he hath used to cry us down and set us forth every where as superstitious and idolatrous men, who by the recalling of holy dayes have a design to bring back the errours & practises of the *Roman* Church. We doubt not but that such as will take the pains to read this; will acknowledge the injustice and untruth of that allegation, and will easily judge that Mr. *Delmey* is the onely Author of all the troubles of our Church, and that we have most justly suspended him from the excercise of his charge among us. And to shew that the things which we have alleadged against him are the true causes of his suspension; although the knowledge we have of his humour and spirit make us fear continual troubles in our Church as long as he shall be among us; Nevertheless we again declare that we are ready to restore him to the exercise of his Ministery, if he will but accept either our Acts or those of the *Cœtus* which we have here represented. Both of them are so just and necessary that we believe, there is none (unless he have a prejudice against us) that will condemn them; & will wonder why Mr *Delmey*, by refusing to submit unto them hath both caused and maintained this funest division in our Church. Yea we hope that such as had prejudices against us through false relations, being now better informed of the merit and justice of our cause, will leave them, and approve of our proceedings. Howsoever we hope that though our adversaries had the power by their factious practises to cause us to be condemned by those whom by all means they labour to draw to their party, we shall be justified by all unpartiall persons, And that God above all, in whom we trust, taking our protection, will maintain & manifest our innocency and confound the designs of those that have conspired together to oppress us.

*FINIS.*

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